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Amendment to the Claims

Claims 1 - 39. (Previously canceled):

40. (Currently amended): A method for screening for yeast capable of producing ascorbic acid (ASA) ASA-comprising the steps of

- (a) ~~obtaining~~ selecting a yeast capable of growing on ASA ascorbic acid or an ASA ascorbic acid-stereoisomer,
- (b) culturing said yeast in the presence of 2-keto-L-gulonic acid (KLG) under conditions suitable for the production of ASA ascorbic acid or an the ASA ascorbic acid stereoisomer; and
- (c) assaying said yeast culture for the production of ASA ascorbic acid or an the ASA ascorbic acid stereoisomer.

41. (Previously added): The method according to claim 41, wherein the yeast is a member of the Imperfect yeast group.

42. (Previously added): The method according to claim 41, wherein the yeast is a member of the family Cryptococcaceae.

43. (Previously added): The method according to claim 42, wherein the yeast is a *Candida*.

44. (Previously added): The method according to claim 42, wherein the yeast is a *Cryptococcus*.

45. (Previously added): The method according to claim 42, wherein the yeast is *Candida blankii*.

46. (Previously added): The method according to claim 42, wherein the yeast is *Cryptococcus dimennae*.

47. (Previously added): The method according to claim 40, wherein KLG is the sole carbon source in the culture.

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48. (Previously added): The method according to claim 40, wherein the ascorbic acid stereoisomer is D-ascorbic acid, D-araboascorbic acid or L-araboascorbic acid.

49. (New): A method for screening yeast capable of producing ascorbic acid (ASA) comprising the steps of,

- (a) selecting yeast capable of growing on ASA as a sole carbon source;
- (b) growing the selected yeast on 2-keto-L-gulonic acid (KLG) as a sole carbon source;
- and
- (c) screening for the production of ASA from the yeast which grow on KLG.

50. (New): A method for the production of ASA or an ASA intermediate comprising culturing the yeast screened according to the method of claim 49 in the presence of a 6 carbon sugar or 6 carbon sugar acid under conditions suitable for the production of ASA or an ASA intermediate and recovering the ASA or ASA intermediate.

51. (New): The method according to claim 49, wherein the yeast is a member of the imperfect yeast group.

52. (New): A method for screening yeast capable of producing ascorbic acid (ASA) comprising the steps of,

- (a) growing yeast from the imperfect yeast group on 2-keto-L-gulonic acid (KLG) as a sole carbon source, and
- (b) selecting the yeast which produce ASA.

53. (New): A method of producing ASA or an ASA intermediate comprising culturing the yeast screened according to the method of claim 52 in the presence of a 6 carbon sugar or 6 carbon sugar acid under conditions suitable for the production of ASA or an ASA intermediate and recovering the ASA or ASA intermediate.

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